

## GOOD STORIES FOR CHILDREN—By Walt McDougall

## Little Howard Megargee Finds the Strange Land Where All Queer Names Originate



## THE COMMITTEE CAME FORWARD

## Creatures of Most Astonishing Aspect Represented Biddles and Hofackers and Hooligans

LAST week, as you will remember, the story stopped, leaving the Princess Alice in the strange land, where all the old folks were children. She was very much startled when Howard Megargee was so suddenly whisked away from her side just after he wished to be with his sick father, the magician, but in a moment she realized what had happened.

"She was frightened, too, for a moment, but when she thought that she held the book of Magic in her hand, with the wishing-spell written in plain letters, she decided that perhaps it was for the best. She knew that she had only to repeat the magic words to be able to have any wish granted, and she determined to remain for a while in the village of old children to see if she could not help them, for it did seem awful to see all those old people playing childish games. It did not seem right.

Some of them were just like bad boys at school—teasing others, putting bars in the girls' hair, breaking windows, throwing stones at cats, and doing all sorts of mean tricks, which, of course, no one expects bad boys to do, but certainly not old men. With gray beards a foot long, and to think of a whole village afraid to go about in the dark made her blush for them.

She walked about the village until noon watching them at their play, and then she sat down under a tree to rest. A woman with a pleasant face came and sat down beside her and said:

"My dolly is quite sick. What shall I give her?"

"I do not know," replied Alice. "I am too old to remember what I gave my dolly when I played with her."

"I had thought of cod-liver oil," said the old woman. "But she does make such a face over that."

She hears of a witch

"What is the matter with her?" asked the Princess.

"I think she is bewitched. I am almost sure the old witch up yonder has done something to my darling," replied the woman, hugging her doll closely.

"Is there an old witch about here?" asked Alice.

"Oh, certainly. Didn't you know that she lived up over the hill near the wood? I thought everybody knew that?"

"Will you show me her house?" asked the Princess.

"No, indeed; not I. That is, I will not go near it, not for the wide world. But I'll point it out to you from a safe distance. They say that all she has to do is to look at you and that fixes you. It's awful to think about it, is it not?"

"I don't believe in witches," replied Alice, "and I think that she is about as real as the Bugaboos you were all so afraid of. I will go and take a look at her."

The old woman got up and went to the top of a little hill with the Princess and pointed to a house on the top of another hill not far away.

"She lives there," she said, "and I think she's at her now, but I would not go near if I were you."

"I really have charge of them all. I prepare their food and put it in their houses, keep their clothes in repair, clean up after them and do all the things that a parent does for her children. They can't do the simplest thing for themselves. I must attend to all."

Alice laughed. "Just like the old woman who lived in a shoe! You have so many children that you don't know what to do," said she.

"Indeed, I am the same, almost. Sometimes I feel like doing exactly as she did—give them some broth without any bread, and spank them all soundly and put them to bed."

"Will you tell me how it happened that all these old people became like so many children?" asked Alice. "That is," she added, "if it isn't a secret?"

"I will gladly tell you, and I think it ought to be printed in the papers or in a book as a warning to all grown-ups not to play too much. All these people once lived in towns and were ordinary common-sense folks, but they became infatuated with the game of golf and spent all their spare time, to the neglect of everything else, playing it. Then they learned another game called 'ping-pong,' which was played indoors, and they simply went crazy over it, so that every hour, except the hours spent in sleep, were devoted to this sport. They went without their meals, because they needed all their evening minutes to play ping-pong upon, and they could think of nothing else."

"Nobody courted, read books, got married or worked—nothing was done but ping-pong playing from dawn until midnight. They would fight and quarrel over the score, call names and swear, but still they played, until finally they began to play on Sunday. Then the minister went and talked to them, for, although he played ping-pong, too, he drew the line at Sunday playing. But they wouldn't listen to him, and he went away sad at heart and took a church in another place. Then, just when they thought they were all right, the wizard Megargee, Howard's father, went there to attend to some business, but finding that everybody was so wrapped up in ping-pong that they had no time to attend to anything else he got mad and said:

"I have a good mind to just release them all from the spell," said the Princess, thoughtfully.

"Why, can you do that?" asked the old woman in surprise. "I thought the magician alone could do such a thing."

"Yes, I could if I wished. I am only wondering whether it is for the best. Perhaps they would be sorry to have to be grown-up folks once more, but it does seem a shame to see them all so childish."

"I think you would do better if you left them alone, for now they are too old to go back and begin again, and besides, it might do no good. They might keep right on playing games, and there would be nobody to take care of them, for certainly I won't look out for a lot of quarrelsome old people, I tell you that. It's all right to take care of children, but cranky old grown-ups are too much for me."

So Alice decided that she would leave them just as they were, and she said goodbye to the old witch. She sat down under the tree once more and opened the magic book.

It opened at the page where the wishing spell was printed. She read aloud:

"ALAKAZAM BAZAZZA KI:  
"HICKORY DICKORY DOCK.  
"OMEGA OM OPEEKA PI?  
"OH DONNERWETTER HOCH!"

Then she wished to be at home in Somnolia with her father, but nothing happened at all. After a few moments, during which she waited, expecting to be snatched up and carried away, as Howard had been, she drew a long breath and said:

"I guess it's no use. The spell, I think, must be spoken by a man."

Then she remembered that Howard had said it backward, and instantly she cried out:

"HOCH DONNERWETTER, OH:  
"PI OPEEKA OM OMEGA.  
"DOCK DICKORY HICKORY.  
"KI BAZAZZA ALAKAZAM!"

She smiled as she said the words, for they sounded so funny, much funnier than they had when she heard Howard say them to change her into a girl, and as she thought of Howard she sighed, and without thinking, said:

"Dear me, I wish he were here now."

She started, and almost jumped out of her skin as she saw him standing, with a smile on his face, right at her side. Then she sprang up and kissed him.

"Oh, I am so glad!" she cried. "Where have you been? It was mean of you to fly away and leave me. You must never do it again."

"It's lucky you wished for me," said Howard, "for it was the only way I could have got here without the book. All father's celebrated tricks failed him, and we thought we had surely lost you. We were just trying some old Hindoo incantations, when I was suddenly picked up, and then I knew that you must have made a wish."

"Well, I am glad I did," replied the Princess. "Now we must be very careful not to make any more unless we decide what it's to be beforehand, and also we must never be separated again, for we may not be able to find each other so easily."

"My father told me that we are in a most wonderful place. Right near here is a strange land, which he said is the place where names come from."

"Where names come from? What do you mean?" asked the Princess.

"Father says that all the names, not our first names, like Howard, Samuel, John, you understand, but our surnames, like Megargee, Jones or Sinclair, for instance, all came first from animals or things somewhere."

"Oh, yes," said Alice, "you mean names like Wolf, Fox, Crane, Bird, Drake, Crow or Pigeon."

"Yes and others, too, such as Stone, Wood, Waters, Lake, Vest, Birch and so forth. Now, father says that near here is the very place where all these names came from, and where all the animals and things still live from which man got their surnames."

"Why, how nice," cried Alice in delight. "We must find the place and see some of them. My last name is Plantagenet, and I'd like to see what that came from."

"And I'd love to find a real live Megargee," added Howard, "if there ever really was such an animal."

"There must be, of course. That is, there must be something called that," said Alice. "I do hope the Plantagenet won't turn out to be some horrid, hairy thing, with claws!"

"Oh, that'll be some sort of a flower, I imagine," replied Howard. "It sounds sort of like a plant, you see."

"Well, let's start right now and hunt for the place. Perhaps the old woman they call a witch can tell us where it is."

They went to the witch's house and asked her if she knew of any place filled with queer animals.

"Why, of course I do," she answered. "It's over the mountains yonder and you can go straight down the road until you get there. I was gathering parsnips for the children one day and when I stood on the top of the mountain I saw dozens of funny beasts, the like of which my eyes had never beheld before. I didn't stay there long, I assure you, my dear, but hurried away as fast as my old legs could carry me."

They scarcely waited to thank her, but ran up the road toward the mountains, because the afternoon was well advanced and they wanted to see all they could before dark. It took them more than an hour to climb to the top of the hills and then they beheld a wonderful sight. As far as they could see the plain was covered with all sorts of queer animals and plants, entirely different from anything we have in our own land.

These were the animals from whom the odd names were taken, animals so strange that one hardly could wonder at the oddity of their names at all. Feathered beasts with spiral legs, things with rooster heads and whales' bodies, forms shaped like elephants, camels or cows, perhaps, but all infixed with mother-of-pearl or with hair in patterns like our rugs and wall paper; others that were filled with air and that had blown away to the grass to keep from being held on by the thistles down by the breeze; others made of basket-work or matting, some shaped like bottles and jars, round, square, triangular and conical animals.

Wood, Waters, Lake, Vest, Birch and so forth. Now, father says that near here is the very place where all these names came from, and where all the animals and things still live from which man got their surnames."

"Why, how nice," cried Alice in delight. "We must find the place and see some of them. My last name is Plantagenet, and I'd like to see what that came from."

"And I'd love to find a real live Megargee," added Howard, "if there ever really was such an animal."

"There must be, of course. That is, there must be something called that," said Alice. "I do hope the Plantagenet won't turn out to be some horrid, hairy thing, with claws!"

"Oh, that'll be some sort of a flower, I imagine," replied Howard. "It sounds sort of like a plant, you see."

"Well, let's start right now and hunt for the place. Perhaps the old woman they call a witch can tell us where it is."

They went to the witch's house and asked her if she knew of any place filled with queer animals.

"Why, of course I do," she answered. "It's over the mountains yonder and you can go straight down the road until you get there. I was gathering parsnips for the children one day and when I stood on the top of the mountain I saw dozens of funny beasts, the like of which my eyes had never beheld before. I didn't stay there long, I assure you, my dear, but hurried away as fast as my old legs could carry me."

They scarcely waited to thank her, but ran up the road toward the mountains, because the afternoon was well advanced and they wanted to see all they could before dark. It took them more than an hour to climb to the top of the hills and then they beheld a wonderful sight. As far as they could see the plain was covered with all sorts of queer animals and plants, entirely different from anything we have in our own land.

These were the animals from whom the odd names were taken, animals so strange that one hardly could wonder at the oddity of their names at all. Feathered beasts with spiral legs, things with rooster heads and whales' bodies, forms shaped like elephants, camels or cows, perhaps, but all infixed with mother-of-pearl or with hair in patterns like our rugs and wall paper; others that were filled with air and that had blown away to the grass to keep from being held on by the thistles down by the breeze; others made of basket-work or matting, some shaped like bottles and jars, round, square, triangular and conical animals.

clear-shaped cows, horses with long bodies like dachshunds or sausage-shaped dogs. In fact, it would scarcely be possible to name a shape that could not be found among the number of beasts feeding in the meadows of this land.

"Oh, I wish I had a camera!" exclaimed Howard, as he gazed upon this wonderful spectacle, and instantly he found one in his hand.

As they descended the mountain side all the animals were either feeding or lying in the shade of the gigantic paroxysm trees, and none of them seemed to be aware of their approach. But when the two reached the level ground a cry came from one of the nearest creatures, an enormous thing, which seemed all eyes, and then all the others sprang up and stared wildly at the children. They were the very first human beings who had entered the land for ages and ages, and, of course, the sight of them alarmed the more ferocious.

Some of them fled at once into the cane brakes along the stream, others flew into the air and vanished in the distance before Howard could take their pictures, while many stood at bay, and just glared so fiercely that Alice's courage almost failed her, but the thought of the wishing-spell sustained her and made her brave.

Howard, who never knew what fear was, walked right up to the very fiercest-looking group and looked them in their eyes, and in a few moments they began to tremble, then they hung their heads, and finally they all knelt down before him, and thus he showed the wonderful power of the human eye. All animals, it is said, will give way before a man's gaze. I have never tried it, but I have often heard that even a lion will back down if a man looks steadily at him, and if you should meet a lion some time I would advise you to try it.

Well, as soon as they began to tremble and shrink from the two explorers a voice came from some one of the group, saying:

"I know what they are! They are men, that's all. I don't think they will harm us."

All the animals began to whisper together and even made remarks aloud about the visitors, and although Howard could not distinguish what was being said, as many of them spoke a language he could not understand, he soon made out that they were selecting a committee to receive them and see what they wanted there. He satisfied himself that they wouldn't harm them, but he was all ready to wish himself and Alice somewhere else if he saw the least danger, and he asked her to sit down on the soft

grass while the animals disputed as to who would be on the reception committee. By and by the thing with the eyes came waddling toward them, while a dozen others stood out a little way in front.

It stopped about ten feet away and raised its head up. Its form was something like a great, shapeless sponge, and its head was fastened to the end of a long, thin neck, like a rubber garden hose, and its two enormous eyes were so large that they almost covered its head, just like a dragon fly's. It uttered a slight cough and said:

"Sir, we greet you and bid you welcome to our land. If you will tell the committee just what you desire here we will try to let you have it, so that you will waste no time."

"Now see here," said Howard. "I may as well tell you right at the start that you need be in no hurry to get rid of us. We don't intend to harm any of you, if you are nice and polite, but we have a magic spell, by means of which we can change you all into anything we please if you are unpleasant, so we will not hesitate to use it, either. We have come to learn about you and your land, not to make trouble; but we wish to be treated kindly, or there will be a lot of funny animals missing in a few minutes."

The members of the reception committee looked surprised and somewhat alarmed at his words. They whispered together and then the thing with the eyes said:

"We do not dispute your statement, but we would like very much to see you do such a stunt. If you will kindly change the Hoolahan over yonder into something else we will be convinced."

"Why change the thing you call the Hoolahan? Why not let me turn you into a rock or a log yourself?" asked Howard.

"Well, because I am a member of the committee, in the first place, and then because the Hoolahan is a terribly disagreeable creature, always fighting and making trouble. So you will be doing good as well as convincing us."

"Point him out," said Howard. "And, by the way, what might be your own name?"

The animal with the eyes said, with a giggle and a simper, "I am a Biddle. There are very few like us left. This animal here, by my side, is the Biddle or Riley. I don't know how it's spelled. My large, red friend on the left, who seems so frightened, is one of the Hofackers, and this other member is the wild, untamable Sullivan."

"What are you called?" Howard asked the warty animal.

"I am the Fitzsimmon," it replied, proudly.

"All right, Fitz," said Howard. "You just change into a guinea pig, and sit down yonder while the rest of the animals talk to me."

The Fitzsimmon was a guinea pig in an instant, and sat down, with the tears running down his face, while all the others trembled, for now they knew that Howard was a magician. The Biddle humbly asked what he wished. Howard said he merely wanted to see them and take some photographs, and would do them no harm as long as they were nice and pleasant.

The committee escorted their visitors all over the region, and they saw everything. The most interesting, however, were the remarkable animals they encountered on every side. Here they saw the Kipling browsing on the rich turf, a wild-looking creature with immense horns and sharp teeth, while near him stood a Gibbon, a sad and mournful-eyed beast with a smooth skin and a short bushy tail, and a little distance away the Hogan and the Finnigan were fighting over their food with loud, angry growls. A whole herd of Honnseyas, wild, ferocious animals, with dangerous-looking claws, galloped about threatening every beast there, and long-necked, big-mouthed Gallaghers roared on the hillside. Two Dinks, also, Snooks were sneaking up toward a little creature which the Biddle said was called a Griggs, as though they were about to devour him, and several fierce Gurdons were only waiting for them to approach nearer to spring upon them.

The Biddle said, with some emotion, that the animals were constantly growing fewer, because they were always eating each other up. Last year, he said, there were many there who had vanished completely. Where whole flocks of Dookeys, Percivals, Ramseys, Gockets and Smileys once covered the plain, none were to be seen, and soon, he said, there would

be no animals left, except the largest and fiercest, like the Sullivans, Hoolahans and McCoughlins.

"I think," said Alice, "that it would be a good thing to change most of them into innocent plants and small animals so that they will not entirely disappear, don't you?"

"Well, some of them would be lost," replied the Biddle. "Of course, small and inoffensive animals like the Crawleys or the Wormsers or the Gibbons can do no harm at all, but things like the McEwens or the Jenkins ought to be either muzzled or abolished entirely."

Why, I have climbed up into a tall tree every night to get away from a big hungry Gimmel that prowls around, and I let you have it, so that you will waste no time."

"Now see here," said Howard. "I may as well tell you right at the start that you need be in no hurry to get rid of us. We don't intend to harm any of you, if you are nice and polite, but we have a magic spell, by means of which we can change you all into anything we please if you are unpleasant, so we will not hesitate to use it, either. We have come to learn about you and your land, not to make trouble; but we wish to be treated kindly, or there will be a lot of funny animals missing in a few minutes."

The members of the reception committee looked surprised and somewhat alarmed at his words. They whispered together and then the thing with the eyes said:

"We do not dispute your statement, but we would like very much to see you do such a stunt. If you will kindly change the Hoolahan over yonder into something else we will be convinced."

"Why change the thing you call the Hoolahan? Why not let me turn you into a rock or a log yourself?" asked Howard.

"Well, because I am a member of the committee, in the first place, and then because the Hoolahan is a terribly disagreeable creature, always fighting and making trouble. So you will be doing good as well as convincing us."

"Point him out," said Howard. "And, by the way, what might be your own name?"

The animal with the eyes said, with a giggle and a simper, "I am a Biddle. There are very few like us left. This animal here, by my side, is the Biddle or Riley. I don't know how it's spelled. My large, red friend on the left, who seems so frightened, is one of the Hofackers, and this other member is the wild, untamable Sullivan."

"What are you called?" Howard asked the warty animal.

"I am the Fitzsimmon," it replied, proudly.

"All right, Fitz," said Howard. "You just change into a guinea pig, and sit down yonder while the rest of the animals talk to me."

The Fitzsimmon was a guinea pig in an instant, and sat down, with the tears running down his face, while all the others trembled, for now they knew that Howard was a magician. The Biddle humbly asked what he wished. Howard said he merely wanted to see them and take some photographs, and would do them no harm as long as they were nice and pleasant.

The committee escorted their visitors all over the region, and they saw everything. The most interesting, however, were the remarkable animals they encountered on every side. Here they saw the Kipling browsing on the rich turf, a wild-looking creature with immense horns and sharp teeth, while near him stood a Gibbon, a sad and mournful-eyed beast with a smooth skin and a short bushy tail, and a little distance away the Hogan and the Finnigan were fighting over their food with loud, angry growls. A whole herd of Honnseyas, wild, ferocious animals, with dangerous-looking claws, galloped about threatening every beast there, and long-necked, big-mouthed Gallaghers roared on the hillside. Two Dinks, also, Snooks were sneaking up toward a little creature which the Biddle said was called a Griggs, as though they were about to devour him, and several fierce Gurdons were only waiting for them to approach nearer to spring upon them.

The Biddle said, with some emotion, that the animals were constantly growing fewer, because they were always eating each other up. Last year, he said, there were many there who had vanished completely. Where whole flocks of Dookeys, Percivals, Ramseys, Gockets and Smileys once covered the plain, none were to be seen, and soon, he said, there would

be no animals left, except the largest and fiercest, like the Sullivans, Hoolahans and McCoughlins.

"I think," said Alice, "that it would be a good thing to change most of them into innocent plants and small animals so that they will not entirely disappear, don't you?"

"Well, some of them would be lost," replied the Biddle. "Of course, small and inoffensive animals like the Crawleys or the Wormsers or the Gibbons can do no harm at all, but things like the McEwens or the Jenkins ought to be either muzzled or abolished entirely."

Why, I have climbed up into a tall tree every night to get away from a big hungry Gimmel that prowls around, and I let you have it, so that you will waste no time."

"Now see here," said Howard. "I may as well tell you right at the start that you need be in no hurry to get rid of us. We don't intend to harm any of you, if you are nice and polite, but we have a magic spell, by means of which we can change you all into anything we please if you are unpleasant, so we will not hesitate to use it, either. We have come to learn about you and your land, not to make trouble; but we wish to be treated kindly, or there will be a lot of funny animals missing in a few minutes."

The members of the reception committee looked surprised and somewhat alarmed at his words. They whispered together and then the thing with the eyes said:

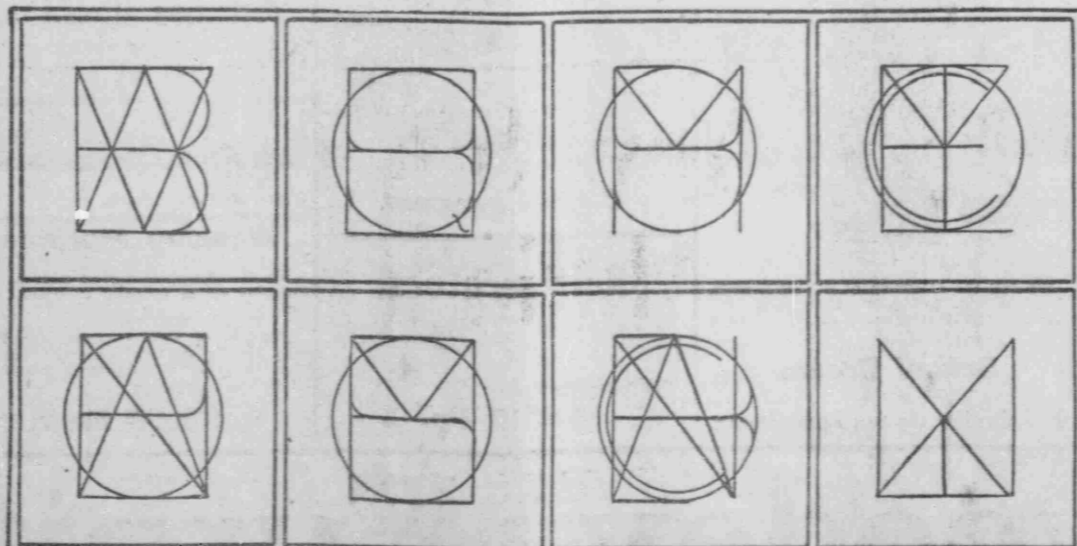
"We do not dispute your statement, but we would like very much to see you do such a stunt. If you will kindly change the Hoolahan over yonder into something else we will be convinced."

"Why change the thing you call the Hoolahan? Why not let me turn you into a rock or a log yourself?" asked Howard.

"Well, because I am a member of the committee, in the first place, and then because the Hoolahan is a terribly disagreeable creature, always fighting and making trouble. So you will be doing good as well as convincing us."

"Point him out," said Howard. "And, by the way, what might be your own name?"

## THE MONOGRAM WORD PUZZLE



The monograms last week spelled the names of American rivers. They were Missouri, Ohio, Columbia, Potomac, Connecticut, Colorado, Hudson and Delaware. The monograms to-day spell the names of American wild animals.

## The Dragons Thwarted

"I wish for a solid steel cap," said Howard hastily, as he saw the dragon-like things were about to swoop down, and instantly both of them were snatched up inside of a cage so strong that they could not break through it. The dragons broke their horns on the cage, and gnashed their teeth at it, and howled in anger, but of course, they could not reach the children. Howard took several photographs of them, and then, seeing that the Princess was so alarmed by the sight of the dragons, he changed them into harmless mice. The sudden change of the dragons into mice delighted him, and the mice were very angry when they found out what had happened when they changed them into mice. The Biddle began to make a speech, but Alice interrupted him to say:

"Howard, the sun has almost gone down! We must hasten."

"Why?" asked Howard. "The wishing spell will not work after sunset, and we don't want to stay in this cage all night."

"All right," said Howard, "where shall we go?"

"Let us go home to my father's palace," said Alice. "Maybe he won't like me, because I'm only a plain American citizen and a girl, but he can't refuse to let me stay with him, can he?"

"Let's wish for a minister and get him to ride right off on what?"

"Let's call up a minister and get him married. After that they will be married, and they will be so glad to have their daughter home again that they won't mind her bringing a minister with her. Whether the minister was worn out or not, I don't know, but they were never able to resist it, and so they lived happily ever after."

Really, the story was so strange that I had not seen the picture that Howard took of the Biddle and the rest of the creatures, so that you can be convinced, you, too, doubt the story.

WALT MCDUGALL